

## Two New Editions of Masses by Rev. Ludwig Bonvin, S. J.

*A tribute to the composer upon his eightieth birthday*  
By J. G. H.



ON February 17 of this year the distinguished composer, Rev. Ludwig Bonvin, S. J., reached his eightieth birthday. To the readers of THE CAECILIA his name is familiar; for he has frequently contributed both articles and compositions to its pages during the last forty years. He is one of the pioneers of good Church Music in the United States, who championed the cause even before Pius X, of blessed memory, inaugurated his reform. Father Bonvin has won international fame not only as a composer and writer in the field of Church Music, but in other departments of music as well. Almost every branch of this art is represented in the formidable list of his works that has twice been published in pamphlet form by Breitkopf and Haertel of Leipzig.

Despite his advanced age, Father Bonvin is still very active. Among his most recent publications there are two Masses which deserve special commendation and which every choir of moderate ability would do well to add to its repertoire.

In order to avoid the possible suspicion of being too much in sympathy with my brother in religion, former choir-director and beloved mentor, I shall restrict myself almost entirely to what others have said about these compositions. The appreciations which I shall quote refer indeed to the first editions; but they apply even *a fortiori* to the new editions, improved as these are both in musical content and in the elegant form in which they have been published.

I. *Opus 6/a: Missa in hon. SS. Cordis Jesu, for four mixed voices with accompaniment of the organ or orchestra. Score and separate voice parts.* (L. Schwann, Düsseldorf).

The celebrated composer and choir director, J. G. E. Stehle, of St. Gall in Switzerland, thus briefly characterized this work in his "Chorwächter" (1891): "Expressive themes, interesting setting, liturgical correctness, and great musical worth highly recommend this beautiful Mass." The *London Catholic Book Notes* (1901) spoke of it as "one of the most attractive and interesting settings of the liturgical text which we have seen for a long time. Father Bonvin has given us a work which is

original and modern without in any way departing from strictly ecclesiastical lines." And the *Dublin Review* (Oct. 1901) wrote: "The style is polyphonic throughout and of moderate difficulty. From beginning to end the Mass is original in construction, religious in character, and intelligently expressive of the words."

"Bonvin—according to Joseph Otten (*Fortnightly Review*, 1901)—is an exceptionally gifted musical individuality.... The composition charms and enlivens by its mellow, rich sonority and its melodious quality in every part.... Choirmasters will find this Mass in the highest degree refreshing and interesting to themselves and their singers."

A more detailed appreciation is furnished by the university professor and composer, Rev. Hubert Gruender, S. J., of St. Louis, Mo.: "Throughout, the music fits the sacred text and expresses its various sentiments in refined musical language. There is originality of invention, and the way in which the themes are used shows extraordinary skill in handling polyphony. The organ-part is more than a mere support for the singers; in a number of places it is quite independent and greatly enhances the expressiveness of the whole work. The *Kyrie* is singularly beautiful; the *Gloria* is as of one mould and very spirited; its *Domine Deus Rex coelestis* is full of power and dignity,—a brilliant passage. The tender *Miserere nobis*, a model of free polyphonic style, as well as the impressive final section also deserves special mention. The *Credo*, too, is very interesting: we would call special attention to the *Et incarnatus est*, in which a theme of the *Kyrie* is again made use of, as also to the *Crucifixus* and *Et resurrexit*. The *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* are full of musical beauties: the opening themes are extremely delicate and artistic; they contrast well with the strong and spirited Hosanna. The charming *Agnus Dei* towards the end once more employs the themes of the *Kyrie*, and thus brings the splendid Mass to a close in accordance with the principles of unity."

The well-known writer on art, composer, and present editor of the "*Stimmen der Zeit*," Rev. Joseph Kreitmaier, S. J., writes thus about the new second edition: "This Mass is truly an excellent composition, full of life and rich in themes. Of course, it supposes able singers; but there are enough of these nowadays. I do not doubt that the Mass will achieve notable success, were it not surrounded in the field of Church Music with a rank growth of mediocre productions that so often stand in the way of what is really good. We are indeed suffering from over-production."

II. *Opus 148: Mass in honor of St. Peter Canisius, for four mixed voices and organ or*

of a very vivid character, and expresses the liturgical text with great energy and lofty pathos. Up to date choirs will produce fine effects with this Mass, written under the influence of ardent enthusiasm. Despite its rich harmonic dress, it bears a decidedly melodic character throughout."

The critic (Canterino) of the *Journal musical* (Paris) finds the Mass "*de'licieuse*" (delightful). "The *Benedictus*," he says, "stirs up deep emotion; this is due largely to the inspiration which in the course of the piece makes the sweetly devout melody suddenly pass over into a warmer and more brilliant key." In fact, this *Benedictus* embodies one of the most beautiful melodies that ever flowed from the pen of Father Bonvin.

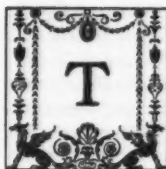
It is hard to give the preference to either one of these Masses: both are constructed along much the same lines, and yet they differ greatly in regard to their themes and their particular characteristics. They have this much in common: there are practically no dry or dull passages in them, and their counterpoints are not mere padding, but always have independent value. In the *Gloria* and *Credo* of both Masses there is a refreshing admixture of unisonos,—see in this connection the powerful *Et iterum venturus est* of the *Canisius* Mass,—and of two and three part sections, assigned to various voices. This is a device that relieves the longer Mass-divisions of their inherent tonal heaviness and at the same time gives welcome variety.

The composer has now also provided an orchestration for these Masses, which originally had only organ accompaniment. We have not the score at hand. Undoubtedly, however, he has applied the principles which he laid down in an article on "Orchestrated Church Music" in the following interesting way: "Why should it not be possible to orchestrate in a perfectly ecclesiastical style? What if the instruments are handled just like the organ or the vocal parts? That would not conflict with their nature, seeing that all of them, the strings as well as the flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, and trombones are in fact "singing" voices, which can by all means be employed vocally, and will thus produce the most beautiful and noble effects.... But some might consider this to be unorchestral. With what right? Does not R. Wagner frequently handle the orchestra like singing-voices or like an organ, and that precisely in the most sublime passages? (See, for example, the announcement of death by Brynhild in the 2. Act orchestra. Score and separate voice parts. (L. Schwann, Düsseldorf)."

(Please turn to page 33)

## The Principal Regulations and Decrees On Church Music

Compiled by Rev. Jos. J. Pierron



THE principal regulations governing the use of the organ are contained in the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* (C. Ep.), which was published in the year 1600 and has since then experienced few changes. Conditions at that time were radically different from today. Masses and other compositions with obligatory organ accompaniment, as well as the accompaniment of the Gregorian chant, universal today, being unknown, the organ was used more for purposes of embellishment, preludes, etc. It ranked equally with the chant so that, when the organ played, the chant was silent. When, however, the organ was given the role of obligatory accompanist to the chant and the provisions of the C. Ep. proved inadequate, they were supplemented from time to time by the decrees and rescripts of the Sacred Congregations of Rites. All these utterances of the S. C. R. have been published in six volumes (1898-1910) known as *Decreta Authentica* (D. a.), authentic decrees.

In general, the use of the organ, simultaneously with the chant and independently of it, is permitted at all liturgical and extra-liturgical functions throughout the year. *IT IS FORBIDDEN* (with the exceptions as noted below):

1. At the liturgical functions on the Sundays of Advent and Lent<sup>1</sup>;
2. At the office of the Dead and High Mass of Requiem<sup>2</sup>;
3. For the accompaniment of the chants sung by the celebrant<sup>3</sup>.

It is permitted, however:

- a) On the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete) and on the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare) at High Mass and I and II Vespers<sup>4</sup>;
- b) On those feasts and ferials which are observed with some degree of solemnity, as, for instance, the feasts of Sts. Matthias, Thomas Aquinas, Gregory the Great, Joseph, the Annunciation and similar ones; at all solemn Masses of a joyful character<sup>5</sup>; at all solemn votive Masses with Gloria and Credo<sup>6</sup>; always on the vigil of Christmas even though it be the fourth Sunday of Advent; on Maundy Thursday at the Gloria only, and on Holy Saturday

from the beginning of the Gloria to the end of Mass<sup>7</sup>;

- c) During Lent for the first Holy Communion of children and at High Masses in honor of St. Joseph<sup>8</sup>;
- d) Always when the bishop (or Legate) enters the church either to celebrate, or to assist at, solemn High Mass till the beginning of Mass and again at his departure<sup>9</sup>. In many places it is customary to sing the Resp. Ecce Sacerdos at his entrance;
- e) On the ferials of Advent and Lent for the accompaniment only of the chants, but not for preludes, etc.<sup>10</sup>;
- f) Throughout the year at popular devotions and at Low Mass when ecclesiastical hymns are sung.

Finally, to make it possible for all, especially for smaller churches, to have solemn liturgical functions without violating liturgical precept, the S. C. R. permitted the use of the organ when it is NECESSARY to support the rendition of the Greg. chant (this includes the Requiem High Mass and all Sundays of Advent and Lent), but the organ must be silent when the singing ceases<sup>11</sup>. By decree of March 22, 1912, this concession was extended to include the accompaniment of polyphonic compositions when necessary.

The accompaniment of the lessons in the Office of the Dead, of the Passion, lamentations, responses and Ps. Miserere on the last three days of Holy Week and the Altar chants is specifically forbidden<sup>12</sup>.

The melodeon and other instruments are not privileged; therefore, when the organ is forbidden these also are prohibited. Concerning their use in liturgical functions see *The Way and How of Church Music*.

The use of the organ will be further defined in the exposition of the liturgical functions that now follow.

<sup>1</sup>C. Ep. 1. I. 28, 1-13. <sup>2</sup>I. c. <sup>3</sup>I. c. <sup>4</sup>C. Ep. and D. a. 2245. <sup>5</sup>C. Ep. 1. I. 28-2. <sup>6</sup>D. a. 3922. <sup>7</sup>C. Ep. and D. a. 4067-6. <sup>8</sup>D. a. 3448-11. <sup>9</sup>C. Ep. 1. I. 28-3. <sup>10</sup>C. Ep. 1. I. 28-13. <sup>11</sup>D. a. 4265-2 May 11, 1900. <sup>12</sup>D. a. 3804-2 and 4156-2.

### NOTICE

The third article in the series of "Notes on the Liturgy" by the Rt. Rev. J. Gerald Kealy, D. D. will appear in the April issue of THE CAECILIA.

## The "Measure" In Gregorian Music\*

By Ludwig Bonvin, S. J.



ARIBO, an author of the second half of the 11th century, after having spoken of the proportional length and brevity of the notes in Gregorian music, adds regretfully:

Of old it was indeed a matter of great moment not only for the composer, but for the singer as well, to compose and sing according to the laws of proportion. This art is long since dead, yea, even buried. Nowadays it is enough if we blend together a few sweet sounds (chords); but no heed is paid to the sweeter music born of (rhythmical) proportion.

In the last words Aribo refers to the part-singing or polyphony which had been introduced in the preceding century, and concerning which Huchbald attests that in it the practice of writing the Gregorian melody "with signs serving to differentiate long and short tones" was preserved, but that this diaphonic singing "demands an execution so ponderous and so slow that the *rhythmical proportions* (of the long and short notes) *can scarcely be observed.*" Hence, all notes were simply sung as of equal length. Gradually diaphony came everywhere in vogue, and by indirect influence changed completely the rendering of Gregorian chant, even when the latter was not itself sung in diaphony. Thus we have heard above Aribo exclaim that rhythmic art was dead, yea, even buried. He himself, it is true, was still aware that Gregorian chant had originally been composed and sung in rhythm; by the 13th century, however, this fact and even the meaning of the ancient neume notation were entirely forgotten, so much so that Elias Salomon could then write that these signs were but an ornamentation of the books, "*ad decorem libri, non ad cantandum.*" In fact the square notation of the 13th and 14th centuries—recognized by Dom Mocquereau, too, as an era of decadence—and still in use even in our days, in spite of the diversity in the form of the notes, does not indicate the rhythm, neither the various duration of the notes nor their metrical accents.

It is to be regretted that the Benedictine school of Solesmes, which at present practically monopolizes Gregorian musical institutions and reviews, stands on this platform of equal notes; it treats all notes as equally short, practically in the form of eights, except the last note of the phrase, a note which it doubles.

The Medicean edition, till recently the official liturgical books of the Church, with its *longa*, *brevis* and *semi-brevis*, had yet treated the notes as having different values, though of undetermined duration; even this scant remainder of the golden era of the Gregorian chant was abolished by Solesmes. Accordingly, that school renounced the first and most important element of rhythm, the various proportional duration of notes. How produce rhythm with notes all equally short? The older Solesmes school, with its founder, Dom Pothier, preserved for this purpose the second element of rhythm, the dynamic accent; it deemed that Gregorian chant borrows its dynamic accents from the text, and from the text exclusively. Gregorian chant, accordingly, would depend in its rhythm on the Latin words placed under it; these words, when they contain artistic rhythm, communicate this to the music to which they are sung. But what, if, as it very often happens in prose, these words are not arranged in artistic rhythm? What, when they are even absent in long stretches of ten, twenty and more notes on one single syllable, as is the case in many melismatic Gregorian melodies? Evidently, under such circumstances, the solitary accented syllable placed at the beginning of such groups, is unable to influence rhythmically, in other words, to rhythmize the whole series of notes with which it is laden.

That is why another section of modern Gregorianists derived from Solesmes, the Beuron Benedictines (Dom Johnner), believes in dynamic accents inherent in the music itself. They divide the melody into groups of two and three notes, irregularly following each other, the first note of the group always carrying the accent.

With this Beuronic treatment of the groups of two and three notes the most powerful and influential branch of the Solesmes school, headed by Dom Mocquereau, does not agree. On the contrary, it champions, instead of the dynamic accent on the first group-note, certain mysterious *ictuses*, comprehensible only to the initiated, and, presiding over the division into the twos and threes, ictuses which, *per se*, contain no greater and distinguishing strength. Yea, the Latin word accent, according to orthodox neo-Solesmian opinion, rather avoids this ictus and supposedly favors the up-beat, the *arsis*.

\*Reprinted by permission of the author and the "Musical Quarterly" of January, 1929.



However, a number of Gregorianists, especially A. Dechevrens, and lately even a confrère of the Benedictine monks, Dom Jeannin, after deep and sincere studies concerning Gregorian rhythm, have rehabilitated this rhythm and shown, by documentary evidences, that it is based on proportional long and short tones, and that thus Gregorian music does not constitute an unnatural exception to the general law, but puts itself in line with the music of all nations and of all times.

A question upon which Dom Jeannin has especially shed new light, is the arrangement in measures in this chant. Attentive and unprejudiced readers of the Gregorian authors, it is true, have often been struck by the thought whether these mediæval writers did not mean real measures; and practical transcribers of the signs of the manuscripts noticed how easily measures could be introduced in many places, although measures of different kinds in the same piece; however they asked themselves: Have these measures really been felt as such and have they been explicitly intended by the Gregorian composers?

For years we were taught that exemption from the restraint of measure is an essential and characteristic mark of Gregorian chant, a feature which distinguishes it from every other music. This doctrine was so much impressed upon us that we scarcely made any attempt to examine in that regard the old authors and the neume-codices. Even the mensuralist up to the present feared, as it were, such a research; he was rather inclined to give a negative answer and expressed the opinion that the Gregorian composers probably were not clearly conscious of writing metric arrangements, even where such an arrangement forces itself on us.

Now comes Dom Jeannin. The study of the measure-endowed melodies of the Orient, the mother-country of our liturgical music, has freed him from these misgivings; on the strength of the rhythmic signs of the neumatic codices he teaches us the existence of an intended arrangement in measures also in the Latin liturgical chant.

The Gregorian measure, he writes in his *Etudes sur le rythme gregorien*, comprehends three elements: 1. The alternation of proportional long and short tones; 2. A grouping of these long and short tones which contains from two to eight primary beats (arrangement in measures); 3. The existence of strong and weak beats.

## I

## LONG AND SHORT PROPORTIONAL NOTES

Dechevrens, Gietmann, and the present writer after them, have published for years documentary proofs of such proportional long and short tones existing in Gregorian music; and lately a means easy and accessible to everybody for convincing oneself of the existence of such note durations in the chant has been offered by J. G. Schmidt's little pamphlet, "Principal Texts of the Gregorian Authors Concerning Rhythm, Context, Original and Translation" (Buffalo Volksfreund Printing Co., Buffalo, N. Y.). These documents are of the greatest importance in our question. Only fragments of them were scattered in various works and articles; in their context and entirety the documents were to be found only in large and expensive works hard to reach. Now in Schmidt's inexpensive booklet they can be consulted in their full context. There we read sentences like the following of Hucbald, an author living in the 9th and 10th centuries:

To sing rhythmically means to measure out the fixed durations to long and short notes.....A rhythmical proportion, determined by fixed laws should exist between the longs and shorts..... Every melody must be carefully measured off like a metrical text.

Or the passages of Guido of Arezzo (11th century):

One tone must be twice as long or twice as short as another.....the duration, when it is to be long, is at times indicated by an horizontal stroke (*episema*) appended to the note:

Or Berno's of Richenau:

In the neumes it is necessary to pay attention where a determined short duration is to be measured out to the notes, where, on the contrary, a longer duration must be given them.....A chant is composed by means of a fitting and harmonious union of long and short notes.

Or the example given by Aribo of two notes which, in their duration, equal four notes, the chant being thus "composed and sung proportionally," or the other passage of the same Aribo, in which he explains what is to be understood by *length* and *brevity*, namely, a "duration twice as long (*duplo longiorem*) or twice as short (*duplo brevior*)."

As sign of the proportional length Guido, in one of the passages quoted above, indicates the horizontal stroke (*episema*) added to a neume. Now this little stroke is often, for the same melodic formula, replaced by the letter *t* [*tarditas* (slowness, length), *tene* (hold)] in the

(Please turn to page 34)

## The Caecilia

OTTO A. SINGENBERGER.....Editor

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December 12th, 1924—

"The CAECILIA deserves every commendation and encouragement, for it is practically 'a voice crying in the wilderness.' I know of no other monthly periodical in the English language midst the great multitude of publication that espouses the cause of sacred music and brings to our notice those compositions that are in harmony with the wishes and regulations of Pope Pius X of saintly memory.

" . . . your efforts merit and obtain every encouragement, for there are but few like you devoting your talents and efforts to the cause of real church music, and unless your numbers grow, the beauty and impressiveness of the Church's liturgy is bound to suffer in the years to come."  
June, 1925—

" . . . We are happy to welcome it (The CAECILIA) to the sacred precincts of our Seminary . . .

"We commend it to our clergy and our sisterhoods, for we feel that in supporting it . . . we are helping to safeguard a precious inheritance that has come to us from the first ages of the Church."

## Scandicus and Climacus

### This Month's Musical Supplements.

The Missa "Cum júbilo" by Father Gruender, S. J., is an elaboration of the beautiful motives of the Gregorian Mass by that name. It is written for two choruses, a four-part male chorus designated "Schola Cantorum" and a unison mass chorus called "Populus". The "Populus" part is within the range of standard congregational hymns and may be sung (1) by a mass chorus of men; or

(2) by a mass chorus of children; or (3) by the whole congregation. In the last case some leaders should be placed near the "Schola" in order to facilitate the direction of the two choruses.

It was an ancient practice of the congregation to join the singing of the plain chant melodies which constitute "the ordinary of the Mass": Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei. Pius X in his famous *Motu proprio* expressed the earnest desire that this ancient practice be revived. Any congregation that can join the singing of the plain chant Mass "Cum Júbilo", or any other plain chant Mass, can also sing the "Populus" part of the present Mass.

Those who have heard the MISSA LITURGICA of the same author sung on many different occasions by the four-part choir and the rest of the student body of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Ill., need not be told that a Mass of this kind is possible and that it arouses an enthusiasm such as cannot be created in any other way. This is the very idea of the LITURGICAL MOVEMENT, and it is in the interest of the Liturgical Movement that also the Missa "Cum Júbilo" is written.

The text of the "Oremus" contained in the school music supplement is a prayer for the Archbishop or Bishop. This chorus can be sung at any visit of your Bishop, either in the Church or in the School. In our High Schools, where the Bishop is present during Commencement exercises, this would be a very appropriate selection. In that case, the name "Sebastiano" should be changed to the name of the visiting Bishop. This chorus will be sung on April 30, in Milwaukee, Wis., by a chorus of 3,000 school children.

## Correct Diction

By C. Pannill Mead



NE of the most important results of the new movement to introduce music into the parochial schools, will be seen in the vocal department. The careful instruction in correct diction which will undoubtedly follow the teaching of songs, will be of untold value to the young people as they grow up.

There is probably no country in the world as careless and slovenly in its everyday speech as these beloved United States of ours, a statement which can be verified any hour of the day by attentively listening to the average American voicing the English language.

George Bernard Shaw, wrote a play called "Pygmalion", in which the leading figure, a professor of English, guaranteed to take a girl of the lowest social strata, and by teaching her to speak academic English, put her in the highest society in less than a year.

Of course Mr. Shaw had it all his own way, and won the bet, in the meantime teaching the rather hard-boiled young woman that she possessed a heart and fine feelings which brought her considerable temporary unhappiness.

Now exaggerated as his theory may be, it has a decided basis of truth. Who is not beguiled and interested at once by a well modulated voice, speaking clear, beautifully enunciated and correctly pronounced English?

Yet even among college graduates it is rare. Our stage which should be a model for all the world to hear it far behind the British stage in its neat and clean cut English. Naturally we have a variety of dialects in this country, just as they have in England, but a dialect that is so pronounced as to be misleading shows a disregard for the niceties of speech.

Take for instance the hard guttural R of the middle west. The R which makes the word horse sound like "horrus". Surely there is nothing either correct or musical about that, and there is a happy medium between the allured "Ah" and the hard "r-r-r", that every child should be taught at as early an age as possible.

Far be it from this writer to suggest that we imitate our British cousins. We have an American language, very beautifully compounded of the many qualities inherent in the vocables of the people who have come to dwell amongst us, but we are about as far from establishing a definite standard as any people can be.

It is up to the teachers in our schools, parochial, private and public, to see to it that our children are taught the value of a well produced, softly modulated voice. The value of distinct consonants, of clearly sounded vowels. How many teachers realize that a, e, i, and U, have each two sounds which must be pronounced if they are to be either sung or spoken so that they are unmistakable.

To teach children the value of a vocabulary that includes something to say in answer to the question "How are you?"—except "Jus' fine", is among the possibilities. "Whucha wan," "I'dnknow", "Whevyubin," are things heard every hour of the day, and by educated (?) people. As for seen, saw, him, her, he and she, they are correctly used by about five people in fifteen. To hear the leading women of a famous cultural club speak of "having two table of bridge", is sufficient to make one weep for their early upbringing.

Now singing is a factor which can do worlds to avoid such vagaries of speech. It only takes a little trouble, for children are the most imitative of little animals. Let the teacher offer a special mark for delicately pronounced words, in both singing and speaking. Let them demonstrate the difference between a correct diction and a poor one and the child will prefer the more musical speech.

Children are sensitive to a degree about being "different". Let them once feel that poorly expressed thought, badly pronounced words, thick enunciation, nasal tones, shrill high pitched voices indicate lack of breeding and lack of knowledge of what their native tongue is capable of, and there is no question but that they will speedily respond.

It is not only a duty of all teachers—not alone those who confine themselves to teaching grammar and English,—but should be a pleasure to see that the young Americans under their care are taught to speak correctly and musically.

They should be taught the value of knowing how to breathe, for this is for the good of their health, and results will more than compensate for the small amount of time devoted to the subject. Teach them to sing good music. Not necessarily difficult songs, but pretty melodies set to verses that have some small value. Children love anything that tells a story, and are quick to assimilate anything that makes for beauty. You are beginning a new movement. See to it that you start right.

(Please turn to page 36)

## On Reading At Sight

By Alexander Brent-Smith



As a general rule, it is safe to say that the ability to read correctly at sight is one of the best tests of musicianship. Not always though, because it occasionally happens that faulty reading-at-sight may be actually due to excess of sensibility, but this and another exception to the general rule I will discuss later.

It must be understood, of course, that this test of sight-reading can only be applied to executants, for it is obvious that really great musicians like Wagner and Berlioz would cut sorry figures in an examination which would probably cause not a tremor in the heart of some aspirant to honours in the Intermediate grade. From executants, however, we do, and should, expect a high standard of efficiency in sight-reading. Indeed, among the greatest performers in the world's history, phenomenal powers of sight-reading have been an outstanding gift. Much as listeners marvelled at Liszt's powers of execution, they were even more thrilled, astounded even, at his uncanny reading-at-sight. Miss Amy Fay, in her charming book "Music Study in Germany", says: "Gracious! how he *does* read! It is very difficult to turn for him; for he reads ever so far ahead of what he is playing, and takes in fully five bars at a glance, so that you have to guess about where you think he would like to have the page over. Once I turned it too late, and once too early, and he snatched it out of my hand and whirled it back." Again, when Brahms as a young man visited Liszt he was too modest to play his compositions before so renowned a pianist, so Liszt said, "Well, I shall have to play," and taking the first piece at hand from the heap of manuscripts, he performed the *Scherzo* at sight in such a marvelous way, carrying on, at the same time, a running accompaniment of audible criticism of the music, that Brahms was surprised and delighted.

To read at sight with absolute accuracy and a complete understanding of the music is, or should be, the object of all our study. And yet, even in these so-called enlightened days, there are many teachers of children who exploit the hopeless system of instruction by memory. Instead of making the learner find out the rhythm of the piece by the exercise of his mind, these ill-advised teachers, blind leaders of the blind, sit down and show the child how it goes, so that the unfortunate infant gains no knowledge which might be of future

use to him, but merely learns that one particular piece, just as parrots do, by mimicry. It is depressing for an examiner to find that a child of twelve who plays his prepared piece really very well, has no more notion of sight-reading than a child of six.

Frequently these spoon-fed young musicians know nothing of the elements of rhythm, so that they cannot possibly find out for themselves how a new piece should go, consequently they are robbed of the power of adventuring on their own into the real and living world of music.

To teach children as though they were unusually tractable monkeys or parrots is an educational crime which should be rigorously stamped out. Children should be taught to use their minds as well as their fingers. Keeping children too long at one short piece frequently causes mental atrophy. They know how it goes, and rattle it off without the least understanding of the why and wherefore of its rhythm. It is far better to leave an old piece even if it is not perfectly known than to allow a child's intelligence to go undeveloped.

Now let us turn to the exceptions to the rule that good reading-at-sight is the best test of musicianship. If we take two players of equal technical skill, but of very different mental calibre, it will probably happen in reading-at-sight some new piece that the player with the better brain may make more mistakes. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that the quicker brain will sometimes make mistakes by anticipation that never would occur to the duller brain. Let me illustrate this truth from another point of view. An illiterate man reading laboriously the sentence "The Leith police dismisseth us" (ignore for the moment its lack of sense and its bad grammar), would probably make no mistake, because he would simply read each syllable as it came before his eye, regardless of what was about to come. But a quick brain would almost certainly get muddled because it would anticipate the tongue-tying syllables. Similarly, in playing-at-sight, a quick brain may get involved in difficulties simply because it is quick and has grasped several bars in advance, a plight from which the slow brain is fortunately saved. The other reason is that in playing a piece at sight, say a fugue of Bach's, the dull brain is merely concerned with the notes as they appear on the page, and these it reads with perfect accuracy, whereas the quick brain is so fascinated by the construction of the music that it may occasionally cause a mechanical error—a wrong note or



a faulty rhythm.

In judging the merits of players in sight-reading, then, before we condemn the perpetrator of most mistakes we must consider carefully the cause of those mistakes, whether it be excessive zeal or merely ignorance.

These exceptions to the sight-reading test apply, of course, only to advanced players.

## My Flageolet and I



THINK Debussy's 'L'Après-midi d'un Faune' must have gone to my head.

That languorous afternoon when wood-spirits made wonderful music under sun-lit leaves, was an unforgettable experience!

Strange little themes were piped out by the leader, then other players would join in and say what *they* thought, while still the swaying rhythms floated on, and the melodious vagueness held my spirit in a mesh of dreams.

In Part 2 'L'Après-midi,' a more plaintive note creeps in. Can it be that the Faun and his companions were not quite satisfied with life in the woods, with sun and shade and melody, and do they feel dimly the need of the soul for human experience?

Anyway, the poignant pipings in this wonderful Prelude took hold of me, but when I tried to remember the themes, they eluded me. Then I, a middle-aged man with grey hair and beard, was seized with a longing to possess a musical pipe which I could take to the woods and play, far removed from human ears. In a quiet street not a hundred miles from the great Orchestral Hall, I found an unorthodox-looking music shop, and there, finding that the young attendant was sympathetic with the grey-beard, I blew into various instruments, and produced weird shrieks and croakings. Finally, I came away with a small, keyed, wooden flageolet with a sweet treble voice of soft quality.

And then to play it!

In my leisure time I set myself to study this little instrument, and at first was greatly discouraged, for my efforts resembled the whinings of a small dog who was very ill.

I have neighbours, but they made no reference to the sounds which often disturbed the nights between 10 and 11 o'clock. I trust they did not associate them with me.

However, after a short time I was able to play a scale clearly, without whining or

From beginners we must demand a correct performance at sight of some piece which should be well within their grasp, and to attain this standard of performance teachers should make sure that each pupil understands the why and wherefore. In other words, children should be taught to play as reasonable humans, not as sedulous apes.

wheeling, and then simple tunes became easy.

What a pleasure! Friends were now allowed to hear me. I had hoped they would feel themselves transported into sylvan scenes where shepherds pipe, and the turmoil of life does not exist. But they showed no signs of appropriate dreaminess. Indeed, one expressed fears for my sanity!

I have a few young lady friends who sing, and I pressed them into the service of the pipe. At first they did not take the offer seriously, but when they found that their voices blended charmingly with the flageolet, they became willing to practice duets with it. Such opportunities should be seized, for they do not often present themselves!

As for me, I am haunted by a desire to play in a sylvan orchestra with fauns and wood-spirits; and dreams of a full-grown flute, with a pure, clear voice, visit me constantly.

I become afraid of myself, for I am a middle-aged greybeard.

Oh, Debussy, with your wonderful Prelude, what have you to answer for?

N. J.

## TWO NEW EDITIONS OF MASSES BY REV. LUDWIG BONVIN, S. J.

(Concluded from page 26)

"The Canisius Mass of L. Bonvin," writes Msgr. F. X. Haberl (*Musica Sacra*, 1900), "is of the Valkyrie). Who ever dared to call his orchestration unorchestral? It is indeed not orchestral in the sense of what is largely conventional in Mass-orchestrations with their up and down sweep and swish of the violins, or the blare and blast of the trumpets and horns, etc. So much the better! This old mannerism in orchestration not only tends to disturb devotion, but as a rule also has very little art about it.... Hence, above all, let there be no such swishing nor yet violin parts made up of mechanical broken chords, but let us have singing parts throughout, even though critics,—because unaccustomed to it,—may perhaps complain of a lack of movement and of life in the violin parts."

# THE "MEASURE" IN GREGORIAN MUSIC

(Continued from page 29)

codices of the St. Gall notation, or by the letter a [*auge* (augment)] in the notation of Metz, and by x. It is clear, therefore, that also these letters signify the length. For the sake of brevity we must abstain in this article from enumerating other means employed by the old notation in indicating the desired note-duration.

However, we learn the fact that the episema is a sign of proportional double duration even without having recourse to the explanations of Guido and Aribo; the neumatic notation itself reveals it. We see indeed in this notation that for the same musical formula one note carrying an episema often is replaced, in the same codex or in another, by two notes; an episematic note, therefore, has the value of two notes. "We can scarcely study and compare in the manuscripts one single page," says D. Jeannin, "without discovering several episematic notes which are elsewhere replaced by two notes or by a pressus or a franculus, or a distropha or a double virga in the form of a pressus."

Gregorian chant, therefore, had long and short notes; but has this music long notes of different durations and shorts of different value? Dechevrens, Gietmann, and the writer in their sequel thought hitherto that they could conclude from one text of Aribo the existence of at least three different duration: a long, a short and a medium duration, and the oriental prototype of our Latin chant possessing a still greater variety of durations, we were inclined to assume also the same variety in Gregorian chant. But Dom Jeannin proves now from neumatic codices, the inadmissibility of a middle duration. Thus only two proportional durations seem to have been used in the original Gregorian chant: a short duration of one beat and a long one of two beats, the length being indicated in the old notation by the signs mentioned above: episema, t, a, x. However, even so, what Aribo says in the text alluded to, remains true; namely, that the letters c and m were employed by the neumists to represent in their notation the proportionality of the notes. They did not, it is true, signify a further shortening or prolonging, but they were in certain dubious cases, etc., signs reminding of the exact observance of the two existing durations.

Notes of only two durations also agree best with the mode of expression used by the Gregorian authors. The latter speak simply of "long and short," without distinguishing different long and short durations; they declare, on the contrary, that "all longs are of equal

length and all shorts of equal brevity," and that "one note is always the double of another." This militates not only against Dom Mocquereau's "nuances" (undetermined durations), but seems also to be opposed to the existence of unequal longs and unequal shorts.

## II

### THE GROUPING OF LONG AND SHORT TONES

These notes of different duration were arranged in *groups of two to eight primary beats*, in other words, in *measures*, and these measures have been felt and intended as such by the composers. This is the latest knowledge we gather from the work of Dom Jeannin.

Let us consult the sources which alone can vouchsafe us information respecting this matter and which explain and control each other: the *didactic writings of the Gregorian musicians* and the *neume-codices*.

#### A. THE GREGORIAN DIDACTIC WRITINGS

The *scholia enchiriadis*, says Dom Jeannin, in the midst of the golden age of the Gregorian chant use the expression: "*velut metricis pedibus cantilena plaudatur*" (the melody must be scanned as by metrical feet). If, therefore, at this epoch musicians, when listening to the Gregorian chant, had the sensation of perceiving a succession of metrical feet, we must from this fact necessarily conclude that this chant was composed not of isolated beats, nor only of D. Mocquereau's binary and ternary movements, but of real metrical groups.

Guido of Arezzo in his "Micrologus" repeats, first, for his contemporaries the words of Hucbald just quoted from the *enchiriadis* and adds immediately as preliminary condition: "*aliae voces ab aliis morulam duplo longiorem vel duplo breviorum... habeant, id est varium tenorem.*" (One note must be twice as long or twice as short as another, i.e., must be of various duration.) A little farther he writes more explicitly for our question: "*Non autem parva similitudo est metris et cantibus, cum et neumae loco sint pedum, et distinctiones loco versuum: utpote ista neuma dactylico, illa vero spondaico, illa jambico metro decurrent, et distinctionem... nunc tetrametram, nunc pentametram, alias quasi hexametram cernes.*" (The similarity between metrical poetry and the chants is by no means small, since the neumes take the place of the metrical feet and the distinctions [musical phrases] represent the verses; one neume, indeed, has a dactylic, another a spondaic, a third one an iambic meter; similarly we discover here a tetrametric dis-

tion [a musical phrase composed of 4 feet], there a pentametric [5 feet], there, as it were, a hexametric [6 feet] distinction.) (Schmidt, "Principal Texts," p. 10-11.)

Now, in the quantitative or metrical poetry of the Greeks and Romans, to which Guido refers, the metrical feet consisted of proportional long syllables of two beats and of shorts of one beat; such a foot was a metrical measure, an iambus was a measure consisting of a syllable of short duration followed by a long one, a spondee was a measure of two long syllables, a dactyl a measure of one long and two shorts; "iambic," "spondaic," "dactylic" groups of notes which Guido clearly declares to be contained in Gregorian music, were, therefore, measures of three and four beats, which reproduce musically the rhythm of the literary iambs, spondees and dactyls. A hexameter, a pentameter, a tetrameter, etc., were verses of six, five, four measures, etc. Hexametrical, pentametrical, tetrametrical Gregorian phrases are, therefore, musical phrases of six, five, four measures.

Also a passage from the *Prologus in tonarium* of Berno of Richenau (1st half of the 11th century) is to be taken into consideration: "*Idcirco ut in metro certa pedum dimensione contextitur versus, ita apta et concordabili brevium, longorum sonorum copulatione componitur cantus.*" (Hence, as the verse in poetry is built up by exact measuring of the feet, so the chant is composed by means of a fitting and harmonious union of long and short notes.) (Schmidt, "Princ. Texts," p. 12.) That Berno here speaks of proportional long and short notes follows from the fact that he had just mentioned *ratoe sonorum moruloe breviores* (proportionally determined short durations of notes) and declared in the words of St. Augustin, that "determined measuring and rhythmizing of sounds lie in the very nature of music" (Schmidt, l. c., p. 12). Of especial weight in our Bernonian passage is the circumstance that it draws a parallel between the formation of the verse by the poet's exact measuring of the feet (metrical measures) and on the part of the Gregorian composer the carefully planned (*apta et concordabili*) groupings (musical measures) which build up the composition (*componitur cantus*.) Therefore, there is here no question of measure-like formations occurring sporadically, but of such that permeate and build up the whole composition, no question of measures which a musician later on laboriously picks out, but of metrical elements which the composers themselves have selected and arranged according to suitableness and assortment regarding the number of beats and rhythmical properties.

Another question: Does sameness of measure obtain in one and the same piece, or does such a piece offer, as in the oriental liturgical chant, a mixture of different measures? Guido's mode of expression in the passage quoted above: "One neume has a dactylic, another a spondaic, a third an iambic meter" tells rather in favor of the last supposition. When Aribio in his treatise *de Musica* writes: "As there are different kinds of verses in the metrical poetry, one being asclepiadic, another sapphic, alcaic, and some glyconic, thus there exist different kinds in the melodies," he seems to say that the meters he here enumerates are also to be found in Gregorian melodies; these latter then would have measures containing a varying number of beats in one and the same phrase, because the sapphic verse consisted of feet in which trochees were mixed with dactyls, therefore measures of three and four beats; the alcaic verse was composed of iambs, spondees and anapaests, and the glyconic contained a spondee, a dactyl and a trochee. Here the neume codices must speak a more decisive word, and they do so in the sense of various kinds of measures in the same piece.

How many beats could the Gregorian measures contain? Dom Jeannin refers to a treatise written in St. Jacques, Louvain, in the 12th century in it we find enumerated 28 Gregorian feet, which, beginning with the pyrrhic and ending with the dispoende, contain 2, 3, 4 to eight beats. Dom Jeannin remarks that paleographic data agree well with this conception. The very neumes, often composed of more than three notes, suggest such a conception, as the neumes, according to Guido of Arezzo, are the metric fete of the Gregorian melodies. Of course, on account of the imperfection of neumatic notation "a certain latitude is left us in our present organization of the Gregorian measure. Different, perhaps equally admissible possibilities will offer themselves to our choice. The living tradition, which guided formerly the choirmaster, does not stand by us anymore."

(To be continued)

## A Chinese Melody

By E. C. Thatcher

Perhaps it was fancy—perhaps it was a dream—but the other day I sat lazily in my chair looking out of the window across the valley, thinking of the trouble in China, when a soft voice like the tinkling of silver bells caught my ear. Turning sharply round I saw a little girl with almond shaped eyes, her dark hair neatly dressed

and adorned with a lovely scarlet flower, wearing a rich silk dress with long wide sleeves that covered her hands.

'I am O'Shi Ling,' she said softly. 'Look!'

I looked, and behold the familiar scene had vanished and in its place stood a finely decorated temple with a wide fluted and deep hung roof and many carved pillars.

'You like music?' inquired O'Shi. 'Chinese music very very old, and instruments very funny-looking to you Western peoples.'

I followed the girl, and we entered the temple.

'This is a King,' she said, pointing to a peculiar object near the door. 'It was invented by the Emperor Tschun about 2300 B.C.'

I saw a large instrument consisting of sixteen different sized stones hung in two rows upon a wooden frame. It was played by being struck with a wooden mallet, and was tuned to the Chinese 'Lue' octave of twelve tones.

Then my little companion showed me a small drum, called a Ya-Kon, which was attached to the body of the player and gave out rather a low tone when struck.

O'Shi said that there was a huge drum in the late Emperor's Palace at Pekin called the Hirren-Kon, which was invented in the year 1122 B.C., and which gave out a deep booming noise like thunder when it was struck.

On a small table lay a Tchoung-Ton, a fan-like instrument made of pieces of wood fastened together. It is used for beating time, and is struck against the palm of the left hand.

O'Shi next picked up a peculiar instrument something like a modern oboe, called a Cheng, a wind instrument used to tune the other instruments.

'Now,' said O'Shi, opening a large lacquer cabinet, 'I will show you our only two stringed instruments,' and she took out one like a long pear-shaped guitar with four strings, called a Kin. It also had inside some small bells which clanged when the strings were plucked.

The other instrument was a Ché, about 9-ft. long, with twenty-five strings and very similar in appearance to our modern dulcimer.

The last instrument I saw was a Siao, which looked very much like a large-sized Pan Pipes.

'Sit down, please, and look,' commanded O'Shi. I did so, and there suddenly appeared a number of figures dressed like

O'Shi, and they each picked up an instrument and took their places. On the right of the hall towards the West stood the Bell and Time-Beater, with his Tchoung-Ton. Next to him stood the Pan Pipe and Cheng players. On the left towards the East stood the Flute player and the Drums, and O'Shi occupied the centre of the room with her guitar-like Kin.

The Time-Beater gave the signal and the orchestra began its weird but appealing music which made me feel drowsier than ever. The sweet odour of azaleas, peonies, and camellias stole through the open doorway, and then without warning the heavy boom of the temple bell smote upon the air, and I woke up with a start.

The maid was sounding the dinner gong downstairs. Yes, perhaps it was a dream, but in troubled China today the little O'Shis still twang their Kins to the accompaniment of the silver temple bells trembling in the soft breeze.

#### CORRECT DICTION

(Continued from page 31)

It is far easier to teach a thing properly in the first place than to unlearn bad habits and teach correct ones.

Dear men and women who have the privilege of shaping the destinies of these little ones, let's teach them to speak their mother tongue so well that the ability to do so will become one of their proudest possessions.

There is no more beautiful language in the world than English. It has a sturdiness, a vitality, and a variety which in the latter quality at least is becoming rapidly more colorful and idiomatic than it ever has been before. The rapidity with which foreigners learn to speak it, is proof of its simplicity, and the tremendous value that it will have in the homes of the children whose parents are uncertain in pronunciation is incalculable.

So teach them the music that is inherent in tidily pronounced English; the music that is so exquisitely soothing when the voice is sweet and clear and resonant, and as a parting suggestion the energy that infuses a word such as camera, when it is given its three syllables instead of only two as in—"cam'ra".

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